



Coastside Fishing Club
666 Brighton Road, Pacifica, CA 94044

From: Ben Sleeter [mailto:bsleeter@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2007 12:36 PM
To: MLPAComments; Melissa Miller-Henson
Subject: Coastside comments on Stakeholder participation document

To: MLPA Initiative; Blue Ribbon Task Force
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
c/o California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comments on "California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Strategy for Stakeholder and Interested Public Participation"

Task Force Members,

Coastside Fishing Club thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the "California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Strategy for Stakeholder and Interested Public Participation" (v. Revised March 30, 2007). This is an important document that will provide guidance for the Task Force and Initiative Team to implement the MLPA in the North Central Coast in a fair and transparent manor. We hope you will find our comments useful and constructive. In addition to major items mentioned below, please note the attached "red-line" version with detailed comments (also submitted to the MLPA "Comments" email address).

General Comments

Overall this document identifies and organizes participatory strategies in a useful and meaningful way. Breaking apart strategies associated with "stakeholders" and "the interested public" is effective and provides needed clarity.

This document is not a "strategy" in and of itself. This document does do a good job of identifying a number of individual strategies that may be used to solicit public input but it does not establish an overarching strategy or plan to integrate the individual elements. It should also be noted that it is possible not all of the individual strategies will in fact occur during implementation of the North Central Coast study region. In this regard, we suggest changing the name to "Guidance for Stakeholder and Interested Public Participation."

A paragraph should be added to address the involvement of the California Fish and Game Commission at all levels of stakeholder-BRTF interaction, especially at formal facilitated functions. Involvement of the FGC at all levels of the MLPA process is integral to building trust between stakeholders/interested public and decision makers. A complete absence in this document of guidance for FGC involvement is alarming. At a minimum, provisions should be made to invite members of the Commission to any and all BRTF/Stakeholder events and most importantly at opportunities where stakeholders are given an opportunity to communicate with the BRTF directly.

Stakeholders Defined



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1. This section claims that “designers of (MPA) systems” would in fact be stakeholders. If the Fish and Game Commission ultimately takes control and designs a network of MPAs independent of users would they be considered “stakeholders?”
2. This second paragraph in this section reads as follows: “The BRTF has been appointed to provide policy guidance in an effort to help stakeholders reconcile their differences.” Is that the intent of this paragraph? If so, what then is the BRTF’s policy guidance going to be to achieve this? Would this include a heavy handed approach where the BRTF tells one group of stakeholders “this is the policy” and that group of stakeholders is then supposed to reconcile their objections?
3. The BRTF’s charge is not to administer public policy. The BRTF is an advisory group designed to facilitate the development of a network of MPAs in California. The BRTF may provide “guidance” on policy; however, such policies must be developed and administered by the Fish and Game Commission and California Department of Fish and Game.
4. The environmental and conservation community is not listed as a stakeholder. Is this by design? Considering their/our involvement in this process they should be identified as part of either the stakeholder segment or the interested general public category.
5. Many stakeholders in this process are in fact, first and foremost, members of the “general public.” This is especially true of recreational anglers. The last sentence reads as if it is possible to identify a single set of “needs and desires” from the general public when in reality one would expect to get the widest range of needs and desires if polling residents of California. How can the recreational angling community’s perceptions as members of the general public be incorporated with the average citizen?

Open Meetings

1. If a “majority” of members are not scheduled to attend does this relieve the state of its obligation to notice the meetings and provide time for public comment? (Bagely-Keene Act)
2. More effort needs to be made to communicate with stakeholders/interested public using traditional methods; not just Internet/email. The vast majority of Californians are oblivious to the fact the state is implementing a first-of-its-kind network of MPAs. This should not be the case.
3. Despite technology used, written summaries should always be made available.

Sincerely,

Ben Sleeter
Coastside Fishing Club
North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group